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Project Concern in Hartford bused approsimately 260 inner city children to suburban elementary schools. The project was designed to evaluate experimentally the effects of (1) placement in a suburban school with or without remedial-supportive assistance and (2) placement in an inner city school with or without compensatory services. Criterion variables used to evaluate the treatment were mental ability, academic achievement, personal-social development, and creativity. Findings of a 1968 evaluation suggested that the bused experimental children in suburban classes in grades K-3 had a significantly greater tendency to show growth in mental ability than the control children remaining in inner city classrooms. In grades 4 and 5, however, the controls showed better achievement than the experimentals. The effects of supportive assistance were mixed. It was felt that the placement of two or three children in a suburban classroom had no measurable negative effect on the academic achievement of the suburban children. A description of the program includes information on staff, methodology, and costs. (EF)

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PROJECT CONCERN
Hartford, Connecticut

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IT WORKS

PROJECT CONCERN
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

One of a Series of

Successful Compensatory Education Programs

UD 007 876

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Robert H. Finch, Secretary

Office of Education
Peter P. Muirhead, Acting Commissioner

FOREWORD

This project report is part of an independent study o_ selected exemplary programs for the education of disadvantaged children completed by the American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif., under contract with the U.S. Office of Education.

The researchers report this project significantly improved the educational attainment of the disadvantaged children involved. Other communities, in reviewing the educational needs of the disadvantaged youngsters they serve, may wish to use this project as a model - adapting it to their specific requirements and resources.

Division of Compensatory Education
Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education

PROJECT CONCERN (HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT)

Introduction

Project Concern is an experimental education program involving the bussing of inner-city children to classes in suburban elementary schools. Among the primary purposes of Project Concern are to assess the academic growth that takes place when the typical disadvantaged child of the city is placed in suburban schools where learning expectations are high, and to demonstrate the operational feasibility of urban-suburban collaboration in such a program. The project was designed to evaluate experimentally four different interventions: a) placement in a suburban school, b) placement in a suburban school with remedial-supportive assistance, c) placement in an inner-city school, and d) placement in an inner-city school with comprehensive and intensive compensatory services.

During the 1966-67 school year, Project Concern was bussing 255 inner city pupils to grades K-5 in five suburbs. Of this group, 224 were Negro, 24 Puerto Rican, 7 white. The children were distributed to 123 classes in 33 schools. Of the 255 bussed pupils, 213 received supportive services from a team consisting of a professional teacher (most of whom were Negro) and a mother from the target area who served as a nonprofessional aide. A team was provided for approximately every 25 pupils. The remaining 42 pupils were placed in suburban schools without supportive services from an external team. For the experimental sample, intact classes were selected randomly from the target area schools which have at least 85% non-white enrollment. This procedure made it possible to free a teacher for each class who could then be assigned to the supportive team. The pupils were assigned on a "vacant-seat basis" to the suburban schools, with either two or three pupils assigned to each classroom.

Project Concern was initiated in 1966 as a 2-year exploratory study. The full scale initiation of the project followed extensive discussions with the school boards, school administrators, and the citizens of the surrounding communities. Five of the suburban communities agreed to collaborate with Hartford on a 2-year basis, while one suburb declined. During the summer of 1966, the logistic feasibility of the urban-suburban educational program was determined in conjunction with a summer school experiment sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity (West Hartford Public Schools, 1967). During the 1967-68 school year, the experimental program involved approximately 260 disadvantaged children.

While the project was basically an experimental bussing program, it differed from similar programs on at least two counts. First, it was set up as a research program with experimental and control groups rather carefully selected. Secondly, the program provided supportive services which accompany the pupils to the suburban schools.

The criterion variables established to evaluate the treatment effects can be grouped into four areas: mental ability, academic achievement, personal-social development, and creativity. In the area of mental ability, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and the Primary Mental Abilities tests were used. In academic achievement, the Metropolitan Readiness Test was employed for kindergarten and grade one, while the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Sequential Test of Educational Progress (Reading and Mathematics) were administered to pupils in grades three to five. At the time of the present report, the results have not been analyzed completely nor were the data available to the present authors. However, the analysis presented in the August 1968 evaluation report (Mahan, 1968) suggested that children placed in suburban classrooms at grades K-3 have a significantly greater tendency to show growth in mental ability scores than those remaining in inner city classrooms. The reverse appears to be the case for children in grade four; while no significant differences in mental ability changes were noted between the experimentals and controls in grade five. The findings were similar in the case of school achievement measures, where the differences were consistently in favor of the experimental groups for those pupils in grades K-3. However, in grades four and five the control groups outperformed the experimentals. The effects of supportive assistance on the bussed pupils were mixed. It was also concluded that the placement of two or three children in a suburban classroom had no measurable negative effect on the academic achievement of the suburban children.

Personnel

Central Staff

A. Project Director. (Master's Degree, experienced and certified in Public School Administration.)

The project director had overall responsibility for the project.

B. Assistant Director (Master's Degree, experienced and certified in Public School Administration.)

In addition to assisting in the management of the project, the assistant director served as a consultant for training and social

work. He directed the monthly workshops for inservice training of non-professional aides and evaluated their performance.

C. Coordinator of Aides. (Experienced in Public Schools, Bachelor's Degree.)

The coordinator of aides kept track of all records and reports that aides prepared and records of attendance of aides and project pupils. He made plans for workshops and assisted the assistant director in planning and conducting workshops and in other functions.

D. Community Worker. (Degree in social work; worked half time with one of the suburban communities in the project.)

This individual was the school social worker assigned to the project and was responsible for approximately 65 children placed in one of the suburban communities.

E. Executive Assistant.

This individual served as the senior clerical/administrative person on the project.

F. Secretarial Assistant.

Field Staff

A. Supportive Teachers. (Eight in 1967-68, 30 during 1968-69.)

While these teachers were paid by the Hartford school district, they were considered regular members of the suburban schools to which they were assigned. Their roles varied among the suburban communities ranging from serving as a regular classroom teacher to working with small groups as a remedial instructor.

B. Para-professional Aides. (High school graduate; nine during 1967-68, 30 in 1968-69.)

These aides were mothers residing in the target area of Hartford. They rode the bus, provided clerical assistance, and conducted home visits.

In addition to the above staff, each suburb in the project assigned a member of its administrative staff as a coordinator with the project central office in order to increase the ease of operation and provide a clearinghouse for communication.

In addition, the project was assisted by two committees. One was a broadly based Advisory Council made up of representatives from participating school boards, State Department of Education, Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Negro community. This Council advised the Director on general operational problems and served as a forum for discussion of new developments. The second, the Professional Advisory Committee, included the director and three university scholars. This group advised on professional questions relating to the research design, data collection, and data analysis areas. Final decisions on such topics were made by this group.

Methodology

As described by Mahan (1968), Project Concern was built upon the following assumptions:

1. Response patterns are most likely to change when the environmental conditions (physical, psychological, and social) are markedly different from those typically encountered.

2. As old response patterns are discarded, the evolving new patterns will develop in the direction of models presented by the peer group, provided such models do not create disabling anxiety or pose unattainable goals.

3. Teacher expectations can be consistently higher (and therefore more effective) when the classroom situation provides feedback to the teacher in terms of adequate goal attainment by a majority of the students.

As already indicated, the two major components were the bussing of children to suburban classes and the utilization of supportive teams. The intent of the supportive team was to assist in overcoming the academic disadvantages of the Hartford children and to relieve the worry that the disabilities of the Hartford children would place an extreme demand on the suburban teacher and work to the detriment of the suburban children. The services of the supportive team depended upon the specific suburban school and, while focused primarily on the experimental pupils, were available to all the children in the suburban classroom. The underlying assumption was that the suburban school with the added services provided by the supportive team, could better meet the remedial needs of the experimental pupils, maintain improved home-school contact, and also

provide a bonus to the local school population in terms of added staff time and talent.

Staff inservice training was conducted "on the firing line" as an integral part of project operation. There were, however, monthly workshops for the supportive teams to provide training and to improve communications.

While not an educational component in the strict sense of the term, a critical area to project implementation was the background situation that gave rise to the idea and the negotiation process that led eventually to the contractual arrangements between Hartford and each of the five suburban towns. Presented below are excerpts from the Project Director's vivid description of this rather stormy period (Mahan, 1968, pp. 1-7).

> This is a problem which came upon Hartford, Connecticut, suddenly. A city of 162,000 people, it suddenly discovered that from 1960 through 1966 its non-white school population had doubled and was edging nervously over the 56% mark. It also discovered that those same phenomena that had been reported in so many other communities were now blatantly apparent in Hartford: achievement and mental ability scores were declining in the non-white schools; there was a clear trend toward a <u>de facto</u> dual school system with some schools all white and others all black; there were clear signs of increasing social problems such as higher drop-out rates, increased unemployment, rising rates of family disintegration, and dependence on welfare payment. The acceleration of these trends in the Insurance City of America was such that by 1966 half of the school districts in the City of Hartford could be officially designated as disadvantaged. Hartford, in spite of some monumental efforts toward urban renewal, had become a city with all the symptoms that are contained in the phrase "the urban crisis."
>
> In a sense, Project Concern faces squarely two sets of data: first, there is the evidence that disadvantaged youngsters in inner-city schools fail to respond effectively to their school environment; secondly, and perhaps most important, there is the accumulating evidence that efforts to correct this situation by way of smaller classes, better teachers, new curricula, special service personnel, and new physical facilities (or a combination of any or all of these) have generally been disappointing.

Hartford itself had, and continues, to embark on a number of such compensatory educational programs. The experience has been one of small gain accompanied by large disappointments. The easy answers have not seemed to work in Hartford as they appear not to have worked in other cities. The alternative to the compensatory education route is a simple one: Integration. But for Hartford the recognition of this fact came too late. Integration with the school population already 56 percent non-white ran the risk of intensifying the flight of the middle-class family from the city. While Hartford was grappling with this problem, it was also confronted with another. Many of the physical facilities of the Board of Education had become outdated, and it was clear that a program of physical renewal of plant was essential. A combination of these two problems resulted in Hartford taking a new look at itself in terms of its educational program.

A study group from Harvard suggested that:

> ...Hartford could no longer solve its educational problems by itself, but that it had to look toward metropolitan cooperation if quality education was to be provided to all Hartford youth. In fact, the report suggested that Hartford consider placing two of its non-white youngsters in each of the suburban classrooms in the greater Hartford area. The initial reaction was fast and negative.

The Connecticut State Department of Education under the leadership of Dr. William Sanders, Commissioner, and through the direct action of Dr. Alexander J. Plante, Executive Director of the Office of Program Development of the Department, agreed to sponsor a proposal for an experimental program of urban-suburban cooperation in the provision of equal educational opportunity for inner city youth. The Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce, acting through its Education Committee and its Board of Education, through the actions of then Acting Superintendent Robert M. Kelly, made clear its willingness to cooperate with the suburban communities in the area.

The receipt of this letter (from the Connecticut State Department of Education) by the local Board of Education touched off a series of events in each of the communities involved. There was a marshaling of forces by both those in favor and opposed, petitions were circulated, meetings held, letters sent, and court suits

threatened. The formal procedure of the Board of Education in all of the towns was to hold a public meeting which, first of all, provided information about the details of the proposal and, secondly, allowed each citizen an opportunity to express his feelings so that the Board might be aware of the local sentiment. The meetings were usually conducted with at least surface decorum, but in each instance the crowds could be described as "standing room only", and the intensity of the feelings ran very high. There were occasional episodes of both vehemence and viciousness. Generally, the tone of these meetings was more negative than positive. The basic objections voiced were as follows:

1) this is Hartford's problem and Hartford should solve it;
2) this is the beginning of Metropolitan Government and it will result in the loss of local autonomy and jurisdiction;
3) it would be better to spend the money on improving the conditions in the Hartford Public Schools;
4) the time involved in bussing would be physically harmful to the children;
5) the contrast between the affluence of the suburb and the poverty of the home would result in psychological trauma;
6) children would become isolated from their own neighborhoods and lose a sense of belonging;
7) their educational disabilities would be brought into clearer focus both to themselves and to the suburban children, resulting in a confirmation of their own negative self-perception and the negative perception of suburban children;
8) suburban schools are already overcrowded and there is no room to bring in outsiders;
9) the presence of disabled learners would result in the reduction of the quality of education in the suburbs;
10) the black community would prefer to have better schools of their own;
11) suburban families had to work their way up and then move out; if inner city families desire the opportunities of the suburbs, let them come by way of the same route.

The Town of West Hartford was the first to agree to this educational experiment, and they did so in resounding fashion, while at the same time they established clear cut conditions that would define the nature of the program.

Foremost among these conditions was a unique demand in the field of American public education: Project Concern must be implemented with a carefully worked out experimental design and must be conducted in a fashion that would permit evaluation of its effectiveness after two years. This condition, buttressed by a number of operational requirements, gave the program its initial structure. The basic operational requirements were as follows:

1. The City of Hartford would pay the suburban town tuition for each child accepted and this tuition would be equal to the average per pupil cost in the suburban schools elementary program.

2. Decisions about placement in programs for Hartford youngsters would be the responsibility of the suburban school administrators.

3. In the event that the suburban school system should feel the program was not working, they could withdraw on 30 days' notice to the Board of Education of the City of Hartford.

4. Transportation and administration of the program would be the responsibility of the City of Hartford.

In this fashion contractual arrangements between the City of Hartford and each suburban town were crystallized.

Evaluation

A. Measures of Achievement

A full analysis of the data, using analyses of covariance and multiple regression techniques, has yet to be reported. Neither were sufficient data available in the report to permit an independent analysis and interpretation by the reader. Accordingly, the conclusions present below are those of the project director (Mahan, 1968, pp. 31 and 33) based upon a series of tests of significance of differences of mean change scores over the one year period from the spring, 1967, to spring, 1968. The spring, 1967, period was used as the base because of the serious deficiencies in the fall, 1966, data.

Mental ability. The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC):

1. Placement in a suburban school along with supportive assistance is associated with significantly greater growth in IQ than placement in an urban school under either condition at grades kindergarten, two, and three.

2. Placement in a suburban school without supportive assistance is associated with significantly greater growth in IQ than placement in an urban school under either condition at grades kindergarten, one and three.

3. At only one grade level (grade four) do subjects in an urban school have a growth rate in IQ that is significantly higher than the experimental groups.

4. The least effective treatment method appears to be urban placement combined with supportive assistance. The experimental group (either or both) outperform these subjects at all four grade levels in which this treatment method was employed.

5. There appears to be no clear difference in the impact of suburban placement by itself and suburban placement along with supportive functioning.

6. The experimental intervention seems most effective up through grade three in terms of measurable changes in intellectual functioning.

7. The signs of "cumulative deficit" do not appear very clearly although there are some slight decrements in the upper two grades.

8. There is no clear trend for drops in performance level to occur after the summer vacation.

9. The changes in IQ, though moderate in magnitude, reflect considerable growth toward the national norm for the experimental groups in grades K through three.

10. The subtests which contribute to the gains in IQ for the experimental groups are Information and Vocabulary in grades Kdg., one, and two with Arithmetic also included at grade three.

The results of the test of Primary Mental Abilities generally confirmed those reported for the WISC. According to Mahan (1968, p. 34):

> There is a clear and significant trend for subjects assigned to experimental treatments to do better than those in the control treatments. On the PMA there are some indications that supportive assistance enhances the performance in each setting, but an ordering of the impact of each treatment in terms of effectiveness would be as follows:
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | 1st | Group IV | (Bussed; Supported) |
> | 2nd | Group III | (Bussed; Non-Supported) |
> | 3rd | Group II | (Non-bussed; Supported) |
> | 4th | Group I | (Non-bussed; Non-Supported) |
>
> Other conclusions supported by these data are that the major impact seems to be in the verbal area with secondary effect on the reasoning test. Also, there is no evidence that suburban placement results in improved performance in the upper two grades (4 and 5).

School achievement measures. The results here were reported as essentially the same as for the mental ability scores. According to Mahan (1968, p.36):

> In the lower grades the differences are consistently in favor of the experimental groups with some slight edge given to the bussed group without supportive assistance. The addition of supportive assistance in the urban school has no measureable impact. However, at the upper two grades the suburban intervention does not appear effective. In fact, the control groups outperform the experimentals.

Finally, to answer the question of the possible impact of Project Concern upon the suburban children's achievement, a sample of suburban youngsters in class with Project Concern children was compared with a sample of children not in class with the Concern children, based upon the composite score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. There was no evidence of negative effect on the academic achievement of the suburban children.

B. Other Evaluation Indices

Based on a three-item sociometric study, it was found that the Project Concern children were selected in a proportion consistent with their proportionate membership in the classroom. Anecdotal reports from the suburban teachers indicated that the social development of Project Concern children was above average.

The project appears to have been successful in the involvement of inner city children in the formal and informal after-school activities. More than 65% of the children took part in regular after school activities. While there was considerable variation among the grades (with higher participation in the upper grades), there was no grade where the level of participation fell below 40%.

There appeared to be no negative psychological or social consequences for the project children that were involved in the suburban placement. Most expressed a liking for the program and a desire to continue. In terms of attendance, the absentee rate for inner city children placed in suburban schools was somewhat higher than that of inner city children in inner city schools, nevertheless, it was still average for elementary school children in Connecticut. Dropouts were relatively few (about 10%) and their attitudes and those of their parents remained basically positive.

C. Modifications and Suggestions

The project has remained basically the same during its first 2 years. With the approach of the 1968-69 school year, 14 Hartford suburban towns have agreed to accept approximately 640 pupils, with Hartford itself placing about 180 youngsters in its previously all-white schools and non-public schools taking another 130 inner city children into their classrooms. All told approximately 950 children will be involved with Project Concern during the 1968-69 school year. During the 1967-68 school year, the project was expanded to include children in grade six; while in 1968-69, the project will encompass some children in grades seven and eight.

The director of Project Concern during its first 2 years has suggested that one person from each of the three housing areas be added to the Project Advisory Board and that a liaison committee be established with membership from the prominent Negro organizations. He also recommends the continuation of the random selection of children to participate in the program. Even though the test data suggest that the project had its greatest impact in the lower grades, it was recommended that the upper-grade children continue in the program because of their preferences for suburban placement, their high level of extra-curricular participation, and the favorable

teacher perception of the growth of these children. Further study of the concept of the suburban team was recommended. It was felt that as the program becomes established in the suburban school, the need for the supportive teacher in the same 25 to 1 ratio would seem doubtful, and the ratio of children to para-professional aide might also be increased to something like 50 to 1.

Budget

1	Project Director	
1	Assistant Director	
1	Coordinator of Aides	
1	Community Worker	(half time with one of the communities)
	Supportive Teachers	One per 25 pupils
	Para-professional Aides	One per 25 pupils

During the 2 year experimental phase the project was supported by the following funds:

	1966-67	1967-68
Title IV, Civil Rights Act	122,700	79,000
Title I, Elem. & Sec. Act	165,000	165,000
Title III, Elem. & Sec. Act	90,000	122,000
City of Hartford	70,000	70,000
Ford Foundation	---	50,000

In the 1968-69 academic year federal support from Titles I and III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, will account for approximately 33 percent of the Project budget, Public Act 611 passed by the 1967 Connecticut General Assembly for programs like Project Concern will provide 22 percent of the budget, and the City of Hartford will provide the remaining 45 percent (approximately $345,000).

The per pupil costs for 1967-68 are illustrated below. The total cost per pupil was $1,473.

Operating Costs:

Tuition	$610.00
Supportive Teacher	312.00
Supportive Aide	127.00
Social Services	72.00

Administration	39.00
Secretarial Salaries	20.00
Lunches	42.00
Transportation	251.00

One of the major items of cost is that due to bussing the project children. It was noted that transportation costs were high due to the small number of children who were widely dispersed in the pilot project. It has been estimated that with full scale implementation the costs could be brought as low as $300-350 per pupil above the tuition cost. (Hartford Public Schools, 1967, p. 13)

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